

**TOWN OF ABINGDON
JOINT COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 2007 – 6:00 P.M.
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM**

A joint meeting of the Abingdon Town Council and the Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, June 20, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. in the downstairs meeting room of the Municipal Building.

A. ROLL CALL

Members of Council Present:

Mayor Lois H. Humphreys
Mr. Robert M. Howard, Vice Mayor
Dr. French H. Moore, Jr.
Mr. Edward B. Morgan

Comprising a quorum of the Council

Mrs. Cathy Lowe, Absent

Planning Commission Members:

Gary Kimbrell, Chairman, Planning Commission
Dr. Ramsey White
Dr. Todd Pillion
Mr. Kenny Shuman
Mr. Matt Bundy

Administrative Staff:

Garrett Jackson, Director of Planning
Cecile M. Rosenbaum, Town Clerk
John Dew, Director of Public Services/Construction
Jim Smith, Director of Wastewater Operations/Town
Engineer
John Powers, Code Compliance Officer

Mayor Humphreys and Garrett Jackson called the joint meeting to order.

Garrett Jackson welcomed everyone to the joint Town Council/Planning Commission meeting and introduced Evie Slone from Hill Studio. Mr. Jackson explained the purpose of this meeting was to review the draft of the comprehensive plan.

The following topics were discussed relative to the proposed comprehensive plan:

Evie Slone presented a brief PowerPoint presentation and provided an overview of the plan content, purpose, public input, and some of the action projects. She emphasized that the Future Land Use Map and the action projects were important parts of the plan that needed to be reviewed carefully. These would set the foundation for future initiatives, including updating the town's zoning map and ordinances.

After the presentation, Mayor Humphries opened the meeting for discussion. The following comments regarding the draft plan were noted:

1. Abingdon was recently listed on the 1,000 Places to Visit Before You Die.
2. Neighborhood park is needed in Southview and near the Highland Subdivision.
3. The plan should include information on the legal aspects of a comprehensive plan; specifically the legal status, the legal requirements, five year update required, etc. Readers should understand how the plan applies to public matters and decisions.
4. Page 5 - The town vision should include something about being a “healthy” community that promotes physical well-being. Also, it should include references to the town being a regional center for health and professional headquarters and operations.
5. The redevelopment concept for the Post Office/Hotel site adjacent to Depot Square needs to be handled carefully. Depot Square has been designed and received a grant for construction and is about ready to be bid. The comp plan should be worded to fit the existing development plan so as not to imply that there is a conflict. Evie agreed to work with Garrett to word appropriately. Also, the new building should be a long-term project (at least 10 years out). Continuing to have a post office in downtown is a priority (distribution operation could be moved). Historically, the post office was at Courthouse Hill, then the Federal Building before it was located where it is now. Town owns Depot Square, but south building walls of depot and freight station are owned by the railroad. Text should provide more information to explain concept so that the town can use to discuss further with public and post mistress.
6. Page 23 – Add reference to the need to expand the library and to maintain it within the town limits. While this is a county facility, it should be encouraged to remain in the town limits; it is important to neighborhoods. Evie notes: Need to get need information for library expansion from Kenny – any report or documentation? Is there a specific room for historical research at the library (or historical society, William King)? Should there be an expanded facility for such since Abingdon is county seat and history is so prominent?
7. Once Comprehensive Plan is adopted, it should be formally forwarded to the County and requested that it be incorporated into the County’s future plans to the extent feasible. This will be a leadership matter and will require some careful handling.
8. Page 19 - Need to reword the age of housing – confusing now.
9. Need to include public safety in the plan. This will be included in Public Facilities and Services which has not yet been drafted. Police chief has provided information; may need additional fire department information (volunteer).
10. The Environment section should include reference to the town’s Tree Commission and Tree Ordinance. Much work has been done by the commission to increase planting in town and to inventory trees on public rights of way. In addition, there has been training of town crews in maintaining trees. The town has a part-time arborist. There are 3-4 arboretums. There is a tree inventory and report available that should be referenced; also there is a map of trees that is part

of the town's GIS system. Environmental policy should include trees as a community and public asset that contributes to the economic well-being and has significant impact visually and environmentally – important to both traffic calming and storm water management and low-impact development. Finally, there are some special environmental areas that should be noted – a grove of new American chestnut trees and a heritage apple tree orchard at the community college.

11. Arts and Culture Section needs to add information about public art. Add a policy regarding the value of public art. Orient the discussion to “asset-based tourism”. Need to pursue an inventory of public art. There are many significant examples of public art in Abingdon that need to be celebrated and pointed out to residents and visitors. Public awareness needs to be increased. A public tour guide would be desirable and of value to the community for tourism. Significant ones noted include: Tiffany stained-glass window at the Courthouse, ribbon sculpture in Veterans Memorial Park, sculptures on the Barter Green, William King Sculpture Garden, interior of St. Thomas Episcopal Church (modeled after 14th Century English Church with icons and descriptions), St. John's Lutheran Church altar rail designed by Bill Gable, brick work in the basement of the Courthouse (?), Civil War Soldier bronze statue at courthouse, gravestones at Second Springs Cemetery (quality stones, sense of place).
12. Economic Development section needs to include significant discussion on the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Need to get latest annual report. Comp plan should include actions and opportunities for growth. Add goals and strategies for bureau.
13. Include Dunn's Meadow property and references in plan. Need to get council report from Garrett which discusses details of property and council actions.
14. Add to Economic Development section the fact that the town attracts many corporate headquarters and has a vibrant professional community. Add to goals and policies, as well as add action strategies. Recent corporate success stories are: Cumberland Energy, Alpha Resources, Food City, Chapter 10 Mental Health & Retardation Community Services Board, medical campus, Cancer Center (county?). The town also serves as a law center for the region. All of these corporate businesses use local facilities, support services and businesses, enhance neighborhoods, etc.
15. Page 47 – EVA. Need to update text regarding wireless. Get from Garrett. Include “Ask Abingdon” campaign.
16. Include recommendations to keep county offices and hospital in town.
17. Include “build-out” discussion and recommendations.
18. Add discussion of Airport to Transportation and public Facilities. Encourage general aviation airport rather than large passenger scale. Discuss relationship and effects on town.
19. Add more discussion in Regional Influences section on county residential growth, recreational initiatives, etc.

20. Page 26. Correct error - Creeper Trail is not owned by the county. Add corridor protection ordinance for the Creeper Trail. Draft completed. Need to consider again. Get from Garrett. Proposes 100 foot buffer.
21. New discussions with the county on a sports complex will influence the development of Wyndale and Trigg Street Park Concepts. May not be needed, or may be implemented for practice play. Make note in plan.
22. 2007 budget adopted by town includes funding for Watershed Study and Low Impact Development methods. Also, the expansion of the Waste Water Plan is almost completed. Need to get information from Jim Smith and include relevant text in section on Public Facilities and Services.
23. Discussion on Action Strategies Map.
24. Discussion on Future Land Use Map.

With no further business before the Council, on motion of Mr. Howard, second by Dr. Moore, the meeting was adjourned.

The Roll Call vote was:

The roll call vote was:

Mr. Morgan	Aye
Dr. Moore	Aye
Mr. Howard	Aye
Mayor Humphreys	Aye

The motion carried.

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Lois H. Humphreys, Mayor

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Cecile M. Rosenbaum, Clerk